



United States Mission to the OSCE

Statement on Speaking Out Against Anti-Semitic Attacks

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Kyle Scott
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
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Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

It is with great sadness that I turn the attention of this council to a recent incident that shows that anti-Semitism is still alive and well in the OSCE region. On January 11, a man with a knife entered the Agudas Chasidei Synagogue in Moscow and brutally attacked eight people during evening prayers. Mr. Chairman, this incident reminds us that no country is immune from violence fueled by hatred and intolerance. It also shows that we in the OSCE must keep up our efforts to counter anti-Semitism and all forms of intolerance.

We welcome the Russian authorities' response in detaining the assailant and their commitment to fully investigate the crime.

In the Ljubljana Decision on Tolerance, participating States emphasized the need to "consistently and unequivocally speak out against acts and manifestations of hate." Therefore, the United States welcomes the statement posted on the website of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which expresses sympathy with the victims and states that national and religious provocations have no place in Russian society. The U.S. joins the Russian Federation in condemning this attack.

We hope that the OSCE can also find an appropriate way to speak out against this act and to assist those government officials and NGO representatives who, in the wake of this incident, will continue their work in favor of tolerance, mutual respect and understanding.

Law enforcement is an important part of these efforts, because effective investigations can prevent impunity and deter future acts of hate. However, legislation, tolerance education, media outreach, data collection, and, of course, political will are also necessary to truly stamp out anti-Semitism and other forms of intolerance.

Therefore, the United States urges participating States to renew their efforts to implement the Sofia and Ljubljana tolerance decisions. We also encourage States to utilize the resources that are available through ODIHR's Program on Tolerance and Non-Discrimination and through the three Personal Representatives for tolerance issues.

In this regard, Mr. Chairman, the United States fully supports Foreign Minister De Gucht's decision to re-appoint the Personal Representatives for the duration of 2006. We appreciate the work the Representatives did last year, and believe that they still have an important role to play in raising awareness of the problems of intolerance and in spreading best practices.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.